



Canadian Apprenticeship Forum
Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage

Promoting Essential Skills and Apprenticeship Training in Aboriginal Communities Across Canada

A Summary of Discussion Findings



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If this information is useful in your organization's work, please let us know by contacting info@caf-fca.org

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A special thank you to our National Steering Committee who worked with us to make the project a success. We are grateful and appreciate the assistance of all the members.

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes key findings from twenty-nine workshops that were held in Aboriginal (First Nations heritage, status and non-status, Métis, Inuit) communities across the country from December 2010 to June 2011. The workshops focused on creating awareness about Essential Skills tools and conducting Essential Skills interventions. These workshops provided an important opportunity for networking and discussion. Workshop participants included employment counsellors who work with Aboriginal clients as well as economic development officers, apprenticeship counsellors, and trades program coordinators. The majority of the participants were employment counsellors who worked on reserves for their First Nation.

Summary of Workshop Discussions

Here is a summary of the main discussion findings from the introductory and follow-up workshops:

Characteristics of Useful Essential Skills Tools

Overall, participants thought the tools shared at the workshops were useful and many started using them immediately with clients.

Participants observed valuable characteristics about Essential Skills tools based on their experiences. Useful tools are:

- trade specific,
- culturally relevant,
- accessible,
- easy to use,
- adaptable, and
- free.

Intervention Promising Practices

Participants shared the following promising practices around interventions with Aboriginal clients:

- Include a cultural element to intervention. Assessment questions should use culturally relevant examples.
- Consider life experiences that enable clients to develop Essential Skills, not just work experiences.
- Build on existing skill strengths and track work so the client can see improvements in their skills.
- Guide the client when using the tools or conducting an intervention. Otherwise, it can be overwhelming and the client will get discouraged.
- Any action plan should have achievable goals with a specific timeframe.



Opportunities to Facilitate Employment for Aboriginal peoples in the Trades through Essential Skills

At all the sessions, participants discussed a number of solutions that would help them conduct more Essential Skills interventions and would facilitate Aboriginal employment in the trades.

For Employment Counselors and others who work with Aboriginal clients

- Coordinate assessments.
- Maintain communication so information about new tools can be exchanged and existing resources can be shared.
- Collect and keep track of the resources in one central place.
- Increase the depth of knowledge about Essential Skills by facilitating the delivery of Essential Skills Training programs that are sensitive to Aboriginal culture such as *An Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey: Planting the seeds for growth*.
- Produce a step-by-step guide offering promising practices on how to conduct a full-scale intervention with learners.
- Provide opportunities to network on an ongoing basis with employers and unions about potential job openings.

For Aboriginal learners

- Start promoting Essential Skills at the high school level.
- More career awareness programs are needed for Aboriginal peoples.
- In partnership with Aboriginal communities, provide programs that offer trade focused pre-employment and Essential Skills upgrading support.
- Ongoing networking with industry to learn about hiring processes, hiring schedules, and workplace readiness is required.
- Many employers in the trades require a driver's license and physical fitness so individuals need opportunities to ensure they can meet these types of practical requirements.
- Ensure relatively minor cost barriers are not preventing Aboriginal apprentices from completing their apprenticeship or getting a job.
- Re-location assistance may be needed when the person is starting their job.
- Create tools and resources that incorporate Aboriginal culture into the design and content so learners will identify with what they are seeing and reading.
- Additional upgrading and exam preparation prior to taking the Certification of Qualification examination is also helpful for individuals.
- Share accurate information about the apprenticeship requirements.
- Aboriginal learners need more opportunities to meet tradespeople so they can learn first-hand what it is like to work in the trades.



Impact of CAF-FCA's Work

This project resulted in many positive impacts which CAF-FCA intends to build on in its future work.

- Most importantly, participants left the sessions even more committed to promoting Essential Skills resources. By using these resources and informing clients about apprenticeship, counselors will help prepare the skilled workforce of the future.
- The networking that took place because of the workshops will now lead to more efficient and holistic treatment of Aboriginal learners.
- The information learned at the workshops was shared more broadly with co-workers and others, increasing the impact.
- CAF-FCA now has a strengthened relationship with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal urban organizations. This ongoing relationship will continue to ensure Aboriginal peoples learn about apprenticeship, benefit from the resources available, and have an opportunity to share their unique experiences.
- Moving forward, workshop participants will need information about job opportunities for individuals when the potential apprentice has successfully done their preparatory upgrading. CAF-FCA supported work that would let Aboriginal organizations take this important next step by connecting counselors with industry.

Opportunities for Further Exploration

Further investigation may be required to pursue some of the action items that were identified by the workshop participants:

- Explore opportunities to support ongoing Essential Skills training programs for those counsellors and coordinators who work with Aboriginal clients.
- Identify additional unions and employers who may be interested in meeting with those working with Aboriginal clients to come up with practical solutions that will enable Aboriginal peoples to get work in the trades.



Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations based on what the workshop participants said that could be acted upon by CAF-FCA and other apprenticeship stakeholders:

- Create an information network for employment counsellors and others so they can share information on resources, programs and effective practices.
- Create and distribute a step-by-step intervention guide that is for an Aboriginal audience.
- Offer opportunities to high school educators to learn about the Essential Skills and apprenticeship tools by holding additional workshops.
- Communicate the value of career awareness programs that offer Aboriginal people opportunities exposure to the trades.
- Create profiles of what is working well from the provinces and territories.
- Communicate clear information on what financial/training resources are available.
- Create an on-line mentoring network so Aboriginal youth or apprentices can connect with Aboriginal tradespeople and learn about what it is like to work in the trades.

Conclusion

Improving Essential Skills among Aboriginal people will facilitate their access to apprenticeship training, improve their chances for success during training, and help them achieve their certification at the provincial/territorial level and Red Seal endorsement. Given the importance of Essential Skills to success in apprenticeship, CAF-FCA remains committed to working with stakeholders in Aboriginal communities to facilitate dialogue and to share resources.



Introduction

This report summarizes the findings from the twenty-nine sessions held with over 400 participants, who work with Aboriginal clients. These sessions were across the country from December 2010 to June 2011. These workshops were hosted by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum – Forum canadien sur l'apprentissage (CAF-FCA) in partnership with Aboriginal (First Nation heritage, status and non-status, Métis, Inuit) organizations. The purpose of the sessions was to create awareness about Essential Skills tools and to share strategies for implementing effective interventions. Ultimately, improved Essential Skills should prepare Aboriginal people to complete their apprenticeship training and to obtain employment in the skilled trades.

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum: Workshop Host

CAF-FCA is an inclusive, national body that brings together all the players in Canada's apprenticeship community. A not-for-profit organization, CAF-FCA works under the guidance of its Board of Directors who represent stakeholders in apprenticeship including business, labour, education, provincial/territorial apprenticeship boards, and equity-seeking groups.

CAF-FCA aims to influence pan-Canadian apprenticeship strategies through research, discussion and collaboration and to promote apprenticeship as an effective model for training and education. This work contributes to the development of a skilled, high-quality, productive, inclusive and mobile labour force.

CAF-FCA is pursuing a number of important Essential Skills initiatives in addition to this project. In the spring of 2010, CAF-FCA undertook a project to increase employer awareness of Essential Skills. The webinars created as part of this work provide employers of apprentices with information on the importance of Essential Skills, what tools are available to them, how to implement a program and how evaluation should occur. CAF-FCA further explored the important topic of Essential Skills with the Canadian apprenticeship community through its February 2011 National Forum Dialogue and its online publication, the Canadian Apprenticeship Journal. One of the key messages arising from the February Dialogue was the need to raise awareness of the importance of Essential Skills in apprenticeship training with all stakeholders including apprentices, employers, training providers, the K-12 system and others. Recognition was identified as the first step to addressing any gaps or challenges. The "Essential Skills in Apprenticeship" issue of the Journal featured Essential Skills initiatives in various provinces and organizations. The issue highlights the importance of Essential Skills to not only apprenticeship systems across the country, but to the people of Canada, the education system and the country's future.



What are the Essential Skills?

Essential Skills enable people to interpret and to effectively respond to the world around them. They include the ability to learn, communicate, read and write, pass on knowledge and participate actively in the workplace, at home and in the community. Essential Skills provide the foundation for learning all other skills and are the cornerstone to lifelong learning.

There are nine workplace Essential Skills:

Reading	Working with Others
Document Use	Thinking
Numeracy	Computer Use
Writing	Continuous Learning
Oral Communication	

Why Promote Essential Skills? The Labour Market Challenges

Pressing labour market challenges threaten the strength of the Canadian economy. These challenges include:

- skills shortages,
- youth unemployment,
- a need for better prepared candidates entering the labour force due to rapid changes in technology and productivity demands, and
- less attachment to the labour force for the Aboriginal population, even though this demographic represents a part of the population that is young and growing.

Apprenticeship training is one way to address many of the challenges identified.

While there are many advantages to apprenticeship training, weaknesses in the area of Essential Skills are a barrier to participation for many individuals. Essential Skills upgrading is especially important for Aboriginal students who typically have high drop-out rates from school and are less likely to complete their apprenticeship training compared to non-Aboriginal apprentices. Essential Skills remain important throughout a worker's career. Being able to understand written or verbal instructions when dealing with new equipment or meeting safety requirements, for example, is crucial to satisfactory job performance.



Purpose of Workshops

Due to the importance of Essential Skills in successfully enabling people to move forward on the apprenticeship path and to obtain jobs, CAF-FCA, in consultation with Aboriginal partners, decided to engage employment counselors, apprenticeship counselors, and trades program coordinators working with Aboriginal clients on and off reserves in a dialogue about Essential Skills.

During the discussions at each workshop, participants shared valuable insights based on their direct experiences with Aboriginal clients. CAF-FCA learned about what participants thought of the existing tools and some of the challenges associated with interventions. Workshop participants proposed a number of solutions that would help Aboriginal people obtain upgrading and get them ready for a job in the trades. Experience with Essential Skills varied across the country. In some communities, the counselors were being introduced to the Essential Skills tools and did not have a lot of experience doing interventions. Others had much more experience. All participants said they benefited from the networking, information sharing and discussion that took place at the workshops.

Workshop Objectives

- Increase knowledge and understanding of effective literacy and Essential Skills interventions for Aboriginal people engaged in apprenticeship to ultimately foster greater labour market attachment.
- Develop strategies and promising practices for embedding literacy and Essential Skills into apprenticeship training.

Project Outcomes

- Greater awareness among Aboriginal service providers on literacy and Essential Skills tools and supports.
- Increased capacity to establish effective literacy and Essential Skills interventions in preparing for an apprenticeship program.
- Increased number of Aboriginal people acquiring the Essential Skills they need to succeed in the trades.
- Increased pool of qualified tradespeople.
- Greater labour market attachment.



Workshop Approach and Structure

To increase knowledge and understanding about effective interventions, CAF-FCA held twenty-nine workshops across the country. These workshops enabled participants to explore the tools, to learn about effective interventions and to engage in a broader discussion about assisting Aboriginal learners who are interested in the trades.

CAF-FCA took a consultative and collaborative approach when organizing the workshops. Initially, all Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy holders were sent a letter inviting them to participate. Specific locations were then decided upon based on regional representation, the presence of local partners willing to recruit participants, a mix of urban and rural locations, and the ability to include First Nations, urban Aboriginals, Métis and Inuit groups. The demand for workshops far outweighed the initial project objectives to undertake activities in six Aboriginal communities and/or urban areas. When word spread, several additional groups asked to be accommodated in this project.

Over 400 people participated in the workshops. Employment counsellors who work directly with Aboriginal clients were the main target audience. For the most part, participants were themselves from First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities. The majority of participants identified themselves as members of First Nations who worked on reserves. Economic development officers, apprenticeship counselors and trades program coordinators attended as well. The Métis Nation of Ontario and BC also participated. In addition, representatives from community literacy organizations, employment agencies, unions, employers, employer associations, provincial/territorial apprenticeship authorities, and high school/college educators attended.

To maintain momentum, it was decided that CAF-FCA should re-visit every group through follow-up workshops. This provided a greater sense of support among participants than could have been achieved by one-time events. It also provided opportunities to build on the initial dialogue.



From December to June 2011, sixteen introductory dialogue sessions were held with a total of 318 participants. In Chart A, some of the locations are repeated twice. In these cases, there was such positive feedback from the first meeting that our partners asked CAF-FCA to come back and do an additional introductory session with new participants.

Chart A

Date	Location	Actual Participants
December 10, 2010	Prince George, BC	10
February 16, 2011	Vancouver, BC	35
February 18, 2011	Whitehorse, YT	11
February 25, 2011	Sudbury, ON	34
March 1, 2011	Mistassini, QC	27
March 22, 2011	Brantford, ON	37
March 22, 2011	Fredericton, NB	18
March 24, 2011	Sault Ste Marie, ON	15
March 28, 2011	Victoria, BC	15
April 17, 2011	Prince George, BC	10
April 27, 2011	Montreal, QC	10
April 28, 2011	Montreal, QC (in French)	10
May 2, 2011	Toronto, ON	20
May 18, 2011	Sault Ste Marie, ON	26
May 25, 2011	Brantford, ON	27
June 15, 2011	Peterborough, ON	13
TOTAL		318



Building on the introductory dialogues, follow-up sessions were held in May and June 2011 in some areas. A total of eight follow-up workshops were delivered with a total of 158 participants who had attended the first workshop.

Chart B

Date	Location	Actual Participants
May 19, 2011	Sault Ste Marie, ON	32
May 26, 2011	Brantford, ON	39
May 30, 2011	Whitehorse, YT	11
May 31, 2011	Vancouver, BC	21
June 7, 2011	Fredericton, NB	24
June 16, 2011	Peterborough, ON	11
June 20, 2011	Manitoulin Island, ON (Participants who initially attended the Sudbury workshop went to this follow-up workshop)	10
June 30, 2011	Wendake, QC (in French)	10
TOTAL		158

There was an opportunity to support four additional sessions with 115 employment counselors, employers, and union representatives in the construction industry. The purpose of these sessions was to connect employment counselors who work with Aboriginal clients and industry stakeholders in the hopes of getting “job ready” Aboriginal candidates’ employment. Based on these initial sessions, regional Working Groups have already been formed and there is a desire to work collaboratively to reduce barriers to employment and to ensure Aboriginal candidates are connected to job opportunities.

Chart C

Date	Location	Actual Participants
June 7, 2011	Ohsweken, ON	30
June 9, 2011	Toronto, ON	30
June 14, 2011	Timmins, ON	25
June 27, 2011	Sudbury, ON	30
TOTAL		115

Overall, CAF-FCA was able to exceed the project requirements by holding more than double the number of workshops required within the original budget. While only twelve sessions were required, the output was twenty-nine.



An evaluation form was distributed at the end of each workshop. A total of 205 were completed after the introductory session and 86 surveys were completed after the follow-up session. The objective of the project was achieved as the majority of participants identified that the workshops increased their awareness and understanding of Essential Skills resources and built their capacity to conduct Essential Skills interventions.

The approach and structure of the workshops worked well for the following reasons:

- **Support from the hosting organization:** The host organizations who recruited participants contributed to the success of the workshop as they ensured those who would most benefit were in the room.
- **Networking:** The workshops provided opportunities to exchange contact information and to encourage collaboration. Prior to these workshops, some participants reported limited connections among community organizations with similar mandates and clients.
- **Flexibility in delivery of workshops:** The workshops were tailored to the needs of each audience to recognize the varied levels of familiarity with Essential Skills. Materials and resources for workplace use by participants were distributed with accessibility and ease of use in mind, which is especially important in those communities with limited time and resources.
- **Participation:** The workshops were designed to optimize hands-on learning and provided opportunities for group discussions. Key principles of adult learning were embedded in the development of the workshops.
- **Travel:** CAF-FCA facilitated high attendance numbers by supporting the travel of the participants to the workshops. Many individuals would not have been able to attend without financial support.



Workshop Content

Introductory Session

The introductory session focused on creating awareness and generating discussion about Essential Skills tools and resources. All sessions started off with an overview of how apprenticeship works and why it is a valuable career choice. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences with Essential Skills and exchange promising practices on how to use the tools with Aboriginal clients. Participants provided their insights on how the tools could be improved. In preparation for this workshop, a list of relevant Essential Skills resources was compiled. This comprehensive list was shared with participants. See Appendix A.

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) Apprenticeship and Essential Skills Tool

One tool that was highlighted at the workshop was the OLES Apprenticeship and Essential Skills tool that was released in September 2009. This tool has three elements: awareness/inform, needs assessment, and learning and training. At the workshop, participants had the opportunity to review all three elements of the tool and discuss them. Some themes from the discussions are summarized below:

Awareness/Inform

In this section of the tool, users find Essential Skills definitions and descriptions of how they are used in everyday life. This section also includes profiles and a “Using Essential Skills on the Job” booklet for ten trades. These profiles and booklets outline real life tasks done on-the-job. They can be used with clients to discuss skill requirements, develop client résumés, and talk about placement plans with employers.

Participants agreed they would be most likely to use these tools with clients in group or individual career awareness workshops. The tools are valuable, according to participants, because they link tasks to skills. Users can see, for example, the practical application of math when they are aware of the tasks of a carpenter. Making this connection is particularly important for learners who may not see the relevance of subjects like math at school. Some participants said that using this type of tool in a career awareness or math class may encourage students who are thinking about a career in the trades to stick with their math courses. Weaknesses in numeracy skills were mentioned by many participants as a challenge when trying to get clients into apprenticeships or jobs. One participant developed special math curriculum for Aboriginal students and said it was helping them prepare for their technical training. Participants recommended that profiles for more trades be developed.¹ In terms of formatting of the trade profiles, participants recommended putting the answers directly below the questions and ensuring a comprehensive answer key is provided.

¹ In the Fall of 2011, OLES released profiles for additional trades. See http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/apprentices.shtml





Needs Assessment

These tools provide information about assessing strengths and areas for improvement. It is important to note that the assessment tools are meant for low-risk informal assessment situations to help an individual identify their current skills. Skills are then compared against those required for an occupation and related training. The outcome to an informal assessment is the development of an action plan. The action plan outlines the individual's overall career goals and the specific tasks they need to do to make it happen. An apprenticeship or job could be the overall goal. Tasks can include upgrading courses and taking a more formal assessment that will help the individual meet their goals.

Assessment tools work best as part of an intake process after a rapport has been built with a client and the idea of Essential Skills has been introduced. For those who may have had negative experiences at school, it is important to emphasize that the assessments are not tests and are for discussion purposes only. Participants noted that they would do the assessments in bits and pieces with clients and would work with them on an ongoing basis. They would give feedback focusing on the identified strengths from which the client can build. If the client was not able to answer some of the questions, efforts would be made to ensure learners were not left with the impression that they could not eventually do the job. Any weaknesses or mistakes would be more effectively positioned as something learners could work on as part of their action plans. Some participants felt this message needed to be clearer in the text.

It was acknowledged that people can exaggerate or downplay their abilities based on their level of confidence on a self assessment and it does not provide an objective measure. Formal tests such as TOWES can be used when a standardized assessment is required. To prepare the client for success with a formal test, working with them beforehand is crucial. Participants agreed many of the tools discussed at the workshop would be useful in doing this preparatory work with clients.

Learning and Training Supports

These resources provide information and activities to support skills upgrading and delivery of literacy and Essential Skills training. Many of these tools can be integrated into job readiness, career awareness activities, or used on their own as part of Essential Skills upgrading activities. These tools are best used after a client has identified their strengths and weaknesses. The most valuable part of these tools is the fact the vocabulary and problem-solving books used trade-specific examples. Essential Skills resources available on the Construction Sector Council or Tools for the Trade websites were also identified as useful based on the provision of trade-specific examples.²

² For more information see **Construction Sector Council** www.csc-ca.org SkillPlan developed a set of workbooks for the construction sector. All are free downloads and include: Essential Skills Self Assessment, Construction Workers Workbook, Essential Skills Activities for Trades, Plain Language for Construction, and Using Trades Math. Also see **Tools for the Trade** www.nald.ca/library/learning/tools/tfft/cover.htm. Workplace materials are available on this site. It was developed in Saskatchewan and focuses upon Essential Skills levels 1 – 3. **Skillplan – Measure Up site** <http://www.skillplan.ca/measureup/default.asp>. is also useful.



In general, the participants felt the tools should include more culturally-appropriate symbols so learners could identify better with them. There is a negative connotation associated with government paperwork and a threat that learners will perceive the tools in this light. High school teachers noted it was best to embed Essential Skills into courses such as career awareness, math and English, so the importance of Essential Skills is reinforced multiple times. High school teachers also said they could see the tools as having benefits for many different kinds of learners in the classroom, not solely Aboriginal students.

Session on Interventions

At the follow-up sessions, discussions focused on how to administer interventions. Positioning the intervention as a journey where learners build on success rather than a high risk pass/fail situation was emphasized. Themes discussed at the intervention sessions included:

- Advice on to complete an intake form.
- How to do the initial interview with the client.
- How to broach the subject of Essential Skills in a way that is supportive.
- An exploration of assessments in numeracy, reading and writing. Every participant was provided with client-ready materials to photocopy. The workshop information and resource materials were "ready to use" for an intervention.
- A discussion of how to mark the assessments and to provide client feedback. Since these are informal assessments, the focus was on helping clients identify strengths and weaknesses, rather than "test scores."
- How to set up a portfolio that allows learners to keep track of their work and show improvement over time. This helps give the learner confidence to do more and ensures different counselors understand each client's progress.
- The importance of a learning action plan where the client identifies specific and measurable goals was outlined. It is important that the learner is accountable for short-term goals.

Diverse Experiences across the Country

The workshop discussions varied based on the participants' familiarity with the intervention process. Some of the individuals invited to the workshops were already very familiar with the intervention process. They had overcome the challenges and used the workshop as an opportunity to share promising practices based on their own experiences. Other organizations were less familiar with doing interventions and expressed a desire to learn from other Aboriginal organizations.



Feedback on Intervention Tools from Participants working on Reserves

To make the intervention tools even more relevant for Aboriginal learners, the specific group of participants from reserves noted that the assessment questions should consider activities on a reserve and should keep in mind many reserves are in rural areas. Reading and writing exercises for clients should reflect what they experience in their day-to-day life. In some cases, questions on planning a community garden or cultural activity such as a treaty day would be much more relevant for the client. Many participants already talk about these experiences verbally with clients to determine skill levels. Participants indicated that additional written questions would be helpful. The community should also be included in the intervention process. Many participants said that they include a role for elders in the process. They also give the community the opportunity to celebrate learners' achievements.

It was agreed that Essential Skills interventions need to happen earlier in some areas. Making the link between Essential Skills and apprenticeship at the high school level was considered particularly important. Many Aboriginal learners drop out of school and do not realize they need their high school diploma or equivalent to get into many trades.

Challenges to Conducting Interventions

Although participants agreed with the intervention process that was outlined in the workshops and said it would help individuals move forward in their training, in reality, some participants said that implementing interventions on reserves is difficult. Although the sharing of generic information is helpful to a certain extent, a "one size solution" will not fit all. Interventions need to have specific cultural references that are unique to each community. They also must consider the demand in the local economy.

In some cases people are assigned specifically to counsel Aboriginal clients in the trades and to coordinate trades programs. In others, the people responsible for employment counseling deal with all of the individuals interested in post-secondary education and may have other job responsibilities, such as managing finances. Due to the number of people they deal with and their numerous responsibilities, they do not have the time to do intense interventions with individuals. The availability of resources and the level of staffing are a challenge in some places.

The staff may not have a background in Essential Skills. Many participants working on and off reserves expressed an interest in additional training so they could gain additional familiarity with assessments, but indicated there are limited resources. There is often no designated person with Essential Skills expertise to help ensure interventions stay on track.

Staff may also work in different branches or offices. They do not necessarily have the opportunity to talk with other literacy or economic development officers dealing with the same clients. Given this reality, it is hard for staff to know each client's background and development. This sometimes results in tests being repeated, causing client frustration. Coordinating an intervention is difficult with all the different players.



An additional challenge is client tracking. It can be difficult to track learner information to assess the effectiveness of various interventions because some are very sensitive about confidentiality and do not want their information put in a central database. Certain organizations have overcome this problem by asking the clients to sign a waiver. It is made clear to the client that the information is for internal use only.

Matching upgrading or training to local labour market needs is challenging. By the time an intervention is established, the client may have lost interest in the trade or the jobs may no longer be available.

The learner needs both a stable life situation and a willingness to complete an action plan for an intervention to be appropriate. Identifying candidates for an intervention and moving them through the process can take longer because individuals do not show up consistently for appointments and may have personal issues that prevent them from continuing with the intervention.

Opportunities to Facilitate Aboriginal People's Employment in the Trades through Essential Skills

At all of the sessions, participants discussed a number of solutions that would help them conduct more Essential Skills interventions and would facilitate the employment of Aboriginal people in the trades.

For Employment Counselors and others who work with Aboriginal clients

- While ensuring client confidentiality, in some cases there is a need to coordinate assessment information so individuals are not given the same tests multiple times. Relevant information about client progress against their action plan must be shared. This coordination will prevent frustration and will help move the client forward. Some organizations have already resolved this issue by having clients sign waivers so information can be shared internally.
- CAF-FCA should maintain communication with all participants so information about new tools can be exchanged and existing resources can be shared. Some are willing to share culturally-specific math curricula that would be helpful to communities who are in the earlier stages of curriculum development. Sharing lessons learned is important so the same mistakes are not repeated and resources are efficiently used. Evaluation form respondents identified a desire to learn more about Essential Skills tools and processes. They are also interested in additional opportunities to discuss these issues with their colleagues.



- CAF-FCA should collect and keep track of the existing and new resources in a central location. There are an overwhelming number of tools and resources available in Canada. The challenge is to be able to identify those most relevant to apprenticeship and proficiency improvement. For example, curricula tailored to a particular trade or curricula designed to help someone move from level one numeracy to level two numeracy can be hard to find.
- Learning more about the rules regarding apprenticeships was also identified as a topic of interest among some participants. If they are better informed, they can give more accurate information to Aboriginal clients.
- Increase the depth of knowledge about Essential Skills by facilitating the delivery of Essential Skills Training programs that are sensitive to Aboriginal culture such as *An Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey: Planting the seeds for growth*.
- In communities where there is less awareness about Essential Skills, counselors said they would like a step-by-step guide on how to conduct a full-scale intervention with learners.
- Opportunities to network on an ongoing basis with employers and unions about upcoming projects and potential job openings is important to ensuring employment counselors and others who work with Aboriginal clients know who to call when they have an individual who is ready for employment in the trades. A chance to follow-up with employers once an individual is hired is also important to identify any additional barriers or challenges that may arise. Strategies for recruitment and retention need to be considered together.
- Aboriginal organizations and industry stakeholders need to understand how each other work, as well as the roles of various individuals. It was suggested an orientation binder for both sets of stakeholders be compiled. More personal connections between employment counselors and industry players also need to be established in some areas. It could be beneficial for the provinces/territories to share what they have already done in this area. In BC, for example, the BC ITA has Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with the First Nations Human Resource Labour Council (FNHRLC) and Métis Nation BC (MNBC). Through these MOU's, apprenticeship information to Aboriginal Skills Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreement holders is shared throughout the province. Additionally, resources were provided to (ASETS) to host Trades Forums. The goals of the Trade Forums are to allow the ASETS to engage industry and businesses and discuss employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people.



For Aboriginal Learners

- To ensure success in the trades, Aboriginal learners need to earn their high school diploma or equivalent. Participants noted, however, many Aboriginal youth are still being turned off learning at the high school level. More needs to be done to engage high school educators in a discussion about apprenticeship and Essential Skills. Completing high school is preferable to dropping out and trying to obtain equivalency later, which can be time consuming and costly.
- Proficiency in math is especially important and students need to be encouraged to stick with their math classes. Some participants said if students were exposed to the practical applications of math and saw the link between math and a future career in the trades, they may be more motivated to learn.
- Youth Apprenticeship Programs need to be promoted to Aboriginal learners so they can learn about the trades earlier on and remain engaged in school.
- Individuals need opportunities to learn more about what trade is going to best suit their interests.³
- More career awareness programs such as Hammer Heads are needed for Aboriginal peoples. Hammer Heads is a program that was started by the Central Ontario Building Trades Council to help youth from impoverished communities develop job skills. Participants are given health and safety training, hands-on exposure to several trades through the Council's union affiliates, and a volunteer placement opportunity. After completing the Hammer Heads program, participants may be offered an opportunity to begin an apprenticeship. Employers have spoken positively about this program.⁴
- In partnership with Aboriginal communities and urban organizations, programs that offer trade focused pre-employment and Essential Skills upgrading support could lead to the placement of Aboriginal apprentices. Basic safety training (WHMIS/First Aid/Fall Protection) was considered important. If possible, more opportunities for industry input and collaboration to ensure individuals are prepared to meet the industry's standards when they complete training are desired.⁵

³ **Aboriginal Construction Careers** www.aboriginalconstructioncareers.ca

This website created by the Construction Sector Council, is designed to provide young Aboriginal Canadians with information that can help them choose the right career path. It offers information on 38 trades and occupations in the construction sector and includes Essential Skills examples from each occupation.

⁴ For a more detailed description of the Hammer Heads program see the CAF-FCA "Creating Diversity" report on the CAF-FCA Reports and Resources page at www.caf-fca.org.

⁵ For an example of community delivered training see

http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/educator/community_training.html. This unit travels among remote communities to deliver training, where the local infrastructure might not be able to support a program.



- Finding an employer remains a challenge for many individuals. Employment counselors and others who have Aboriginal clients can work collaboratively with employers and unions to connect individuals to employers. The focus should be on practical solutions that will overcome the barriers that are preventing Aboriginal people from gaining employment. Ongoing networking with industry to learn about hiring processes, hiring schedules and workplace readiness is required. It is helpful if Aboriginal people can have access to mock aptitude tests for entry into certain apprenticeship and trades training so individuals can practice prior to taking the actual test.
- Many employers in the trades require a driver's license and physical fitness. Individuals need opportunities to ensure they can meet these types of practical requirements.
- For those who cannot cover the costs, support to cover examination fees, tool expenses, or union fees may facilitate apprenticeship completion and/or initial employment.
- If the job requires the individual to move, re-location and mobility assistance may be needed.
- Tools and resources that incorporate Aboriginal culture into the design and content need to be created. A greater identification with the material builds familiarity and confidence and helps the learner move forward with their action plan. At the workplace, employers need continued access to programs that create awareness about cultural sensitivity.
- Additional upgrading and exam preparation prior to taking the Certification of Qualification examination are also helpful for individuals, especially for those who have anxieties about tests.
- In partnership with the provincial/territorial apprenticeship authorities, continue to hold sessions on apprenticeship so more individuals can learn accurate information about the requirements. The nature of the work, the need for mobility, and industry expectations need to be better understood. Where they exist, the rules for voluntary versus compulsory trades also need to be better explained.
- Aboriginal learners need more opportunities to meet tradespeople so they can learn firsthand what it is like to work in the trades.



Impact of CAF-FCA's Work

This project resulted in many positive impacts which CAF-FCA intends to build on in its future work.

Most importantly, participants left the sessions even more committed to promoting Essential Skills resources. By using these resources and informing clients about apprenticeship, counsellors will help prepare the skilled workforce of the future.

- Almost all of the 205 participants who filled in evaluation forms after the introductory sessions noted that the workshops had increased their awareness of the resources available. At the follow-up sessions, 86 participants filled in the evaluation form. When asked if they felt more aware of the OLES Apprenticeship and Essential Tools almost every respondent said they were more aware.
- Consultations with twenty individual participants who participated in both the introductory and follow-up sessions indicated half of the participants had already used the OLES Apprenticeship and Essential Skills tool with co-workers and clients. The tools were used in career awareness, Essential Skills upgrading, training workshops and curriculum development. For clients, the tools were most helpful in getting them to think about doing a GED or college program.
- High school teachers were motivated to incorporate more literacy and Essential Skills tools into their career awareness, math and English classes.

The networking that took place because of the workshops will lead to more efficient and holistic treatment of Aboriginal learners.

- Rather than getting assessed on the same skills multiple times, participants were able to talk and realize where cross-over assessments might be occurring. They discussed how they can work together to share information and to ensure learners are getting help to improve a range of skills. This will prevent some learners from getting frustrated or lost in the system and will lead to more effective interventions. This networking was particularly valuable for participants in the Northern or rural areas.

The information learned at the workshops was also shared with others, increasing the overall impact.

- Almost all of the 205 participants who filled in the evaluation form noted they would share what they had learned at the sessions with their colleagues. About half said they would share the information with employers and policymakers/decision-makers.
- At the follow-up sessions, more than half noted that they would use the tools and information they learned with clients. Almost 80 per cent of respondents said they solidified or gained valuable networking contacts.



Here are some of the direct comments from participants about the value of the workshop:

“Good to see spectrum of education and employment officers attending workshop. More people are making connections to treat client holistically and see a life plan.”

“Fantastic resources – these will help our whole school approach to pathways planning. I’d like computer lab opportunity to try Essential Skills assessments – we’re planning on using many of these resources across all grades 9-12 and courses (English, Math, Careers, STEP, and Co-op)”

“I really enjoyed this workshop! It helped clarify questions I had concerning apprenticeship and what exactly it involves. I was also impressed with the handouts provided and I can see how they can be incorporated with helping clients. This will make an excellent building block for career success.”

“Really enjoyed today’s workshop. Very informative. Gave me great tools to use for my clients interested in apprenticeships. Will be dissecting package to make up my own. Thank you!”

“Went well – always enjoy working with the team. Good to know variety of ways of assisting with our clients – ‘Fellow Community Members’ to gain meaningful employment – Security through newfound skills & training.”

“Thank you for the necessary contribution to the Aboriginal Community. This is also an opportunity for us to network and to be involved in the development of tools for our clients.”

“I believe high schools really need this information because the Ontario curriculum requires all grade 10 students to take careers. Those teachers need to be informed about apprenticeships and Essential Skills.”

“Can see benefits of incorporating into assessment process with clients in any area of career exploration. I look forward to working this information into employment counselling and work with employers to identify their needs more clearly in relation to Essential Skills.”



CAF-FCA and the Aboriginal communities now have a strengthened relationship. This relationship will continue to ensure Aboriginal peoples learn about apprenticeship, benefit from the resources available, and have an opportunity to share their unique experiences.

- As part of another project, participants in the workshops have already partnered with CAF-FCA to hold two Employer Engagement Forums on a reserve. This discussion encouraged employers on reserves to take on apprentices and identified barriers as to why more Aboriginal employers are not currently participating. For those who do not want to leave the reserve, ensuring employers on reserves want to hire apprentices is vitally important to getting people jobs.

Moving forward, in some areas employment counsellors and others who work with Aboriginal clients need access to information about job opportunities when potential apprentices have successfully completed preparatory upgrading. CAF-FCA supported work that would let Aboriginal organizations take this important next step.

- Regional focus groups were held with the construction industry in Timmins, Ohsweken, Sudbury and Toronto. At the sessions, employers and unions emphasized the importance of Essential Skills as an employee requirement and supported the use of interventions prior to seeking an apprenticeship. Industry stakeholders expressed a desire to reduce barriers and provide much needed opportunities for work experience. Regional Working Groups have already been established in Sudbury,⁶ Timmins,⁷ Toronto,⁸ and Ohsweken.⁹ It is anticipated Aboriginal people will get hired onto construction projects based on these connections.

⁶ The names of the participating organizations are currently not available.

⁷ The names of the participating organizations are currently not available.

⁸ Participating organizations include Canadian Union of Skilled Workers (CUSW), Carpenters Union, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Native Canadian Centre of Toronto (NCCT), Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, Miziwe Biik, MTCU Apprenticeship, Pre-Apprenticeship Standard Council, Service Canada, Council Fire, and Diversity Business Network

⁹ Participating organizations include Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, North America Construction, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, Grand River Employment And Training (GREAT), and Ontario Power Generation (OPG).



Opportunities for Further Exploration

Further investigation may be required to pursue some of the action items that were identified by the workshop participants. The opportunities may include:

- Explore whether there are ways to support ongoing Essential Skills training programs for counsellors and coordinators, especially for those in the North who may not have access to this kind of training otherwise. More than a one day training session may be required.
- Identify additional unions and employers who may be interested in meeting with employment counsellors and others working with Aboriginal clients. Discuss the possibility of holding meetings to discuss practical solutions to getting Aboriginal peoples jobs in the skilled trades.

Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations based on what the workshop participants said that could be acted upon by CAF-FCA and other apprenticeship stakeholders:

- Communicate with employment counsellors and others who serve Aboriginal clients on an ongoing basis. Collect and share information about Essential Skills and apprenticeship resources. Provide a central venue to network and to talk about experiences. Through the network, encourage information sharing and partnerships that could support trade focused pre-employment, workplace readiness, and Essential Skills upgrading based on what is already working. If Aboriginal organizations in BC, for example, are having success with a program or curriculum, they could share it with Aboriginal organizations in Ontario.
- Create and distribute a step-by-step intervention guide that is for an Aboriginal audience and uses an Aboriginal graphic designer. This guide will promote the implementation of more effective interventions by sharing promising practices and lessons learned.
- Offer opportunities to high school educators to learn about the Essential Skills and apprenticeship tools by holding additional workshops. Students who get exposed to the tools may see stronger links between what they are taking at school and its practical application in the trades. This type of learning is important as students' Essential Skills and the completion of high school help prepare students for careers in the trades.
- Communicate the value of career awareness programs that offer Aboriginal people exposure to the trades by sharing information about programs and practices.
- Provinces and territories holding industry events for Aboriginal people to learn about hiring processes, hiring schedules, and workplace readiness could be profiled to share what they are doing with others.
- Identify what resources are available in each province and territory to assist Aboriginal apprentices. Communicate clear information on what financial/training resources are available to help people overcome cost barriers
- Create an on-line mentoring network so Aboriginal youth or apprentices can connect with Aboriginal tradespeople and learn about what it is like to work in the trades. Real-life experiences could be shared and success stories profiled. Aboriginal tradespeople can explain how they got into the trades and how they overcame barriers.



Conclusion

With increased awareness through the workshops, participants who work with Aboriginal clients on and off reserves are now more able to effectively integrate Essential Skills into intake, assessment and training practices. This helps to ensure clients receive appropriate services and programs. When the Essential Skills of potential apprentices are properly assessed and action plans developed, a more streamlined and successful learning process is achieved. It is expected by employers that candidates will meet high industry standards and will be productive and safe at the workplace. There are also many benefits to workers if they can complete their apprenticeship and receive their Certificate of Qualification. Improving Essential Skills of potential apprenticeship candidates is, therefore, vital to employment in the trades.



APPENDIX A

NOTE: Readers should note this list is provided for information purposes only. CAF-FCA does not necessarily endorse any of the resources or programs listed.

GENERAL ESSENTIAL SKILLS RESOURCES

Applications of Working and Learning (AWAL)

www.awal.ca

This Canadian project is designed for educators. It has been developed to enhance learner and instructor understanding of Essential Skills used at work, school, home and in the community. Many classroom activities can be accessed through the database on this site. As well, *The Big Picture – Essential Skills for Life, Learning and Work* can be accessed at www.awal.ca/files/BigPicture/BigPicture.html

Bow Valley College

<http://www.towes.com/en/products--services/workplace-training-products/workplace-training-products>

Building Workplace Essential Skills (Reading Text, Document Use, and Numeracy) can be accessed from this site. TOWES assessments provide results by level and on the IALS scale.

Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

www.itsessential.ca/itsessential/display_page.asp

The site includes Essential Skills information applicable to learners of English as a second language, including lesson plans and other ideas for teaching.

College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading

www.collegeupgradingon.ca

This site contains research and project reports in the area of Essential Skills in the Ontario college system.

Community Literacy of Ontario's Basic Literacy Practitioner Training

www.nald.ca/literacybasics/essentl/intro/01.htm

This website is for practitioners, offering a number of tools related to Essential Skills. There is also an online, self-directed training module which provides agencies and individuals with resources to increase knowledge and awareness of Essential Skills.

Construction Sector Council

www.csc-ca.org

SkillPlan developed a set of workbooks for the construction sector. All are free downloads and include Essential Skills Self Assessment, Construction Workers Workbook, Essential Skills Activities for Trades, Plain Language for Construction, and Using Trades Math.



Essential Skills 101

www.learninghub.ca

The Avon-Maitland District School Board offers free courses for adult learners. Essential Skills 101 is available online.

Essential Skills Curriculum

www.lleo.ca/LLEO_pages/resources.html

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) developed Essential Skills curricula for entry-level jobs. The units are available on CD and can be purchased from the website.

Making Essential Skills WORK for You

www.laubach-on.ca/teach

The learning activities found on this site are workplace-oriented and focus on Oral Communication, Problem Solving, Document Use, Working with Others, Job Task Planning and Organizing.

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

www.nald.ca

NALD is an online service housing Essential Skills tools, books, documents and research. The organization created NALD@Work (www.naldatwork.ca), which contains teaching and learning resources and assessment tools.

Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES)

www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/workplaceskills/oles/olesindex_en.shtml

OLES has developed tools and supports for the improvement of adult literacy and Essential Skills. It also provides links to other useful Essential Skills websites.

Ontario Skills Passport

<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/login.jsp>

Resources that can be accessed from this site include: Essential Skills Check-in and Essential Skills Check-up and On the Way to Work

<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca/OSPWeb/jsp/en/OSPWayToWork.jsp>

Steps to Employment

www.settlement.org/steps/manuals.html

This site provides workbooks for second language learners and instructors related to Essential Skills. All are occupation-specific.

Tools for the Trade

www.nald.ca/library/learning/tools/tftt/cover.htm

An authentic workplace materials workbook is available on this site. It was developed in Saskatchewan and focuses upon Essential Skills levels 1 – 3.



Workplace Education Manitoba

www.wem.mb.ca

This website offers information on Essential Skills, case studies supporting Essential Skills upgrading, resources and a blog for all users to share ES knowledge and ideas.

Skillplan – Measure Up site

<http://www.skillplan.ca/measureup/default.asp>

The Skillplan *Measure Up* website is a tool for learners seeking to enhance their Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy skills. Once a learner understands his/her current level of skill in these domains, the site is organized to assist in practice according to level or occupational interest. The activity sets have been created by using “Authentic Workplace Documents” which brings further meaning to the enhancement plan. These are the documents that workers use in various jobs. Adult learners are more driven to practice Essential Skills building if the tasks are authentic and used in real life, learning and work.

Working from hard copies of these documents is preferable, therefore, practitioners are encouraged to take the time to create a hard copy library of the activity sets, answer keys and steps to getting to the answer. Binders of activity sets can be created by level and by occupation with separate binders holding the answer keys.

Skillplan has also created a series of workbooks by sector such as construction, tourism and trucking. Workbooks provide tools for learners to do as a self-study exercise.

Other binders of tools are available at a cost:

Document Use at Work	\$78.00
Measurement and Calculation for the Trades	\$78.00
Numeracy at Work*	\$78.00
Numeracy Rules	\$27.00
Oral Communication on the Job	\$78.00
Thinking Strategies for Numeracy*	\$89.00
Reading at Work*	\$78.00
Writing at Work	\$78.00

* A facilitated online training session is available for approximately \$110.00 (2 x 2hr online sessions) to enable a practitioner to better understand how these tools can be used to assist learners to improve their Essential Skills levels. Sessions are normally led by the author(s) of the material.



Industry Training Authority

<http://ita.essentialskillsgroup.com/>

This website is funded by the Province of British Columbia in collaboration with the Industry Training Authority. You must register as a user in order to access the formal assessment feature and subsequent suggested ES Enhancement Plan. The plan includes various free links, as well as the option to access PLATO/Eskilon for a fee. This website is geared to individuals who wish to enter trades training and want to know if their Essential Skills levels are currently sufficient to succeed in training.

BBC Skillswise

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/>

This is an interactive site that provides a series of factsheets, worksheets, games and answer keys related to Reading Text, Numeracy, Document Use, Writing and Thinking Skills.

Government of Alberta

<http://employment.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4328.html>

This site provides Workplace Essential Skills training programs.

Government of Manitoba

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/index.html>

Apprenticeship programs

http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/educator/community_training.html

Community-delivered training that travels to remote communities to deliver training where the local infrastructure may not be able to otherwise support it.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/apprentice/curriculum.html>

Curriculum standards

http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/forms/pdf/inside_calendar_w_cover.pdf

Apprenticeship Technical Training Course Calendar:

Government of New Brunswick

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.200971.html

Workplace Essential Skills Program

<http://www.nbawes.ca/main.html>

Aboriginal Workplace Essential Skills Project

Government of the Northwest Territories

<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>

Education, Culture and Employment, Training and Employment Programs

Jobsnorth.ca

<http://www.jobsnorth.ca/>

Links employers and potential employees to work



Government of Ontario

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/adultlearning/>

Adult Learning Programs – provide ES training to adults below a grade 9 level

<http://www.ptp.ca/wescan-workforce-essential-skills-across-canada/>

Assessment and upgrading tools

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

<http://staging.cmec.ca/Programs/lit/initiatives/Pages/prince-edward-island.aspx>

PEI Regional Action Plan

National Seafood Sector Council

<http://www.nssc.ca/skills/products.htm#activities>

Essential Skills Tools

Aboriginal Human Resource Council

<http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/en/programs/partner/current>

Partner projects

Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council

<http://www.nald.ca/nlllc/esl/info.htm>

Nunavut Literacy Council

<http://www.nunavutliteracy.ca/english/resource/resource.htm>

This site provides online resources, including Essential Skills facts, information and training information

Ontario Literacy Coalition

<http://www.theconstellation.ca/olc/news.shtml?x=233240>

Workplace Literacy and ES Pilots in Ontario

Quebec English Literacy Alliance

<http://qela.org/2010/05/12/essential-skills-series-reading/>

Saskatchewan Literacy Network

<http://www.sk.literacy.ca/>

Yukon Literacy Coalition

<http://www.yukonliteracy.ca/litfacts.htm>

Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2010/edu/1101n04.htm>



Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia

<http://www.awens.ca/programs.html>

The Workplace Education Instructor Certification Program is intended for instructors who work closely with a work site project team and program participants to develop and deliver Essential Skills learning programs that respond to the identified needs of employees in the organization.

Trade Essentials

<http://www.tradeessentials.ca/>

Trade Ability

<http://tradeability.ca/>

Apprentice Trades

<http://www.apprenticetrades.ca>

London South Bank University

www.lsbu.ac.uk/lluplus/aboutus/index.shtml

Resources are associated with Literacy, Numeracy, Dyslexia and Learning Styles, Family Learning and Community and Workforce Development.

National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

www.nrdc.org.uk

The NRDC is a national independent center dedicated to research and development projects to improve literacy, numeracy, language and related skills. The list of practitioner resources is extensive and includes topics such as: Reading, Numeracy and Writing.

Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL Classroom

<http://collegetransition.org/docs/ICAcriculumguide.pdf>

This site provides resources for training, blending career awareness and Essential Skills.

A Social and Holistic Approach to Numeracy

<http://www.socialnumeracy.ca/index.htm>

This math project could be adapted to fit with Essential skills education with an emphasis on math. Audio and video clips are provided.



ABORIGINAL-SPECIFIC RESOURCES

Aboriginal Construction Careers

www.aboriginalconstructioncareers.ca

This website created by the Construction Sector Council, is designed to provide young Aboriginal Canadians with information that can help them choose the right career path. It offers information on 38 trades and occupations in the construction sector and includes Essential Skills examples from each occupation.

Aboriginal Ironworkers

www.aboriginalironworkers.ca/whatittakes/index_e.asp

This site provides information on becoming an ironworker and places Essential Skills within Aboriginal culture.

Building Environmental Aboriginal Human Resources (BEAHR)

www.beahr.com

This project was created in 2001 and was designed to increase Aboriginal employment in the environment sector. It aims to create an awareness of environmental careers among Aboriginal communities, support Aboriginal development, and recognize and support environmental excellence in the Aboriginal community.

Canadian Indigenous People: Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills

This publication is a survey of Aboriginal Workforce/Essential Skills Development Programs and includes recommendations for implementation and delivery. It can be found on the National Adult Literacy Development (NALD) website at <http://library.nald.ca/research/item/5979>

Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association

<http://pgnaeta.bc.ca/departments/first-nations-rural>

Workforce Centre of Excellence

Literacy BC

<http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/Rescentr.htm>

This site provides learning resources in several contexts. It has a hyperlinked resource list for Aboriginal Literacy and another for Workplace Literacy Resources. Resources can be borrowed from the centre and information on how to order is provided.

Northwest Territories Literacy Council

www.nwtliteracy.ca

This site provides northern and Aboriginal content, including information, research reports and tools associated with family literacy, Aboriginal languages and literacy, workplace literacy and essential skills, and adult learning. Links include other Essential Skills resources and websites. It also includes six issues of an online interactive newspaper, *The Northern Edge*, which has a workplace literacy section and embedded resources for adult learners.



Yellow Cedar Learning Centre

www.saset.ca

An Essential Skills video, ESI –Essential Skills Investigation, is available for purchase.

Wokini – Billy Mills and Nicholas Sparks

Billy Mills was raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. In 1964, he won the Olympic gold medal for the 10,000 meter run. In this book, he shares the secrets of self-understanding and happiness by describing his healing journey after the death of his sister. This book has been used extensively in many Aboriginal Essential Skills building programs. Special discounts are available for volume orders.

Perseverance – Margaret Wheatley

This book has been effective in Essential Skills programs. Wheatley is an internationally acclaimed writer, speaker and teacher for how we can organize our work and sustain our relationships as we journey through chaotic times. The book is divided in to short inspirational chunks of advice, guidance, philosophy and poems.

Grass Roots Press – Adult Literacy and ESL Resources

www.grassrootsbooks.net

This distributor offers a wide variety of general and Essential Skills building tools for all levels. Most of the tools represent Canadian content and many are Aboriginal-specific. Their publication line consists of approximately 400 titles sold to over 4,500 customers in Canada, the United States, the UK, New Zealand and Australia.

Eskilon Learning Solutions – Essential Skills Online

www.eskilonlearning.ca

Eskilon Learning Solutions Inc. is the Canadian distributor for PLATO Learning Inc., a world leader in products and services for online education and training. They provide Web-based tools and resources to help learners and instructors establish instructional and career goals, recognize prior learning and skills, and identify skill gaps. They have created custom learning paths that address skills levels based on the International Adult Literacy Scale, focusing mainly on levels 1-3.

ACCESS and Métis Nation BC Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures (ESAF)

ESAF began its work in 2007 and is located in the heart of New Westminster, British Columbia. ESAF helps Aboriginal People gain valuable essential skills, which are the foundation for learning all other skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide people with skills to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change.

Staff administers the TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) at the beginning and end of the program, working closely with employer partners to create and customize lesson plans specific to the job requirements. A 12-week job-coaching program follows the initial ESAF training experience which can run anywhere between 6 to 12 weeks.



Essential Skills are considered a crucial bridge to working with employers. The program focuses on job-specific skill development for urban Aboriginal learners. The overall aim of this program is to provide participants with customized training that will support employment success and retention.

For more information, contact Cori Thunderchild, Director at (604) 521-5929

corit@buildingfuturestoday.com

<http://esaf.accessfutures.com/>

Metis Skills & Education Centre (MSEC)

As a partner with Essential Skills for Aboriginal Futures, MSEC has imported the learning from this model into their trades training programs such as Culinary Arts and Carpentry, as well as their general career exploration program. Curricula developers work with instructors to identify areas of technical training that can benefit from Essential Skills support to reinforce the learning process. Learners are assessed using TOWES and individual enhancement plans are created.

Contact: Marlin Ratch, Director of Employment & Training, Metis Nation BC

mratch@mNBC.ca

Foundations Workplace Essential Skills Program

The Foundations Workplace Skills Program is a skill exploration program designed to assist unemployed individuals re-enter the labour market. This program uses a three-phase approach allowing clients to enter and exit the program.

Locations:

Surrey Training Centre

10060 King George Hwy
Surrey, BC
V3T 2W4

Abbotsford Training Centre

#101-31943 South Fraser Way
Abbotsford, BC V2T 1V5
tel : 604-852-5520
fax : 604-852-5548

Chilliwack Training Centre

#200 45905 Yale Road W.
Chilliwack BC V2P 2M6
tel : 604-793-9050
fax : 604-793-9052

General Program information: Pam Tetarenko

tetarenkop@douglas.ca



The Essential Skills Guiding Team

The Essential Skills Guiding Team (ESGT) originated in 2006. It brought together Aboriginal Program Directors and Front Line workers to develop programs that embed Essential Skills in current Employment and Training programs. They promote Essential Skills within their own organizations and create workshops, awareness sessions and tools shared widely with others across Canada. Some of the accomplishments to date include:

- creation of presentation material for leadership consideration
- ES introduction workshops
- Creation of the Essential Skills Investigation (ESI) DVD series and facilitator guides
- Translation of the 9 Essential Skills into various Aboriginal languages
- Advice and guidance to curriculum designers
- Pilot testing of ES materials with learners in urban, rural and remote communities

For more information, contact: Colleen Yamamoto
essentialskills.guidingteam@gmail.com

The Coast Salish Employment and Training Society (CSETS)

CSETS provides a cultural approach to Essential Skills building. They were the first to engage elders in the translation of nine Essential Skills and have since added “listening” to their Essential Skills vocabulary.

Contact information: CSETS Duncan office at 250-746-0183.

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